

“In These Imperiled Times”



Asa Bushby (1834-1897)  
1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery

The Civil War Correspondence  
of the  
Men of South Danvers  
Exhibit Guide

## “In These Imperiled Times” Introduction

*“Let there be such an attendance as the momentousness of these imperiled times demand.”*

*Regarding Anti-Slavery meeting to be held on Sunday April 14th, 1861 at the South Danvers Town Hall  
Announcement printed in South Danvers Wizard on April 10th, 1861*

April 14th, 1861 was to be like any other Sunday in South Danvers. People would rise to attend church, and afterward, they might visit with family or friends. Many planned to join their acquaintances at the anti-slavery meetings scheduled to be held at the Town Hall at 2 and 7 p.m. William Lloyd Garrison and Parker Pillsbury were two of the speakers scheduled to address the town. But when word came that morning Fort Sumter had been attacked, there were many who refused to believe it. Not until the following day was everyone forced to concede that war had, indeed, begun.

The confusion experienced by the people in South Danvers was not unique. Despite the rising tensions between the north and south during the last decade, and despite the secession of seven southern states in the last few months, many in Massachusetts were plunged into the same turmoil as those in South Danvers. Telegrams might have whizzed across the wires in the early 1860s, but not all of the reports could be trusted. Charles D. Howard, the publisher of the local newspaper, *The South Danvers Wizard*, and Fitch Poole, its editor, didn't have the kind of staff available to larger newspapers to obtain the latest information. But one week after war had begun, Howard and Poole were offered a note sent home by seventeen year old Moses Shackley of the 8th Massachusetts Regiment. His letter to his parents conveyed a breathlessness that certainly must have mirrored his emotions. Written on April 19th, he hints at the riot in Baltimore which resulted in the deaths of four men from the 6th Massachusetts Regiment.

During the next four years, hundreds of letters from the soldiers of South Danvers appeared in the *Wizard*. But the very act of agreeing to be published seemed to cause some of the men to censor their own words. In the fervor of those early days, both north and south believed the war would end in as little as three months. And so it is understandable that the soldiers would report Union losses as victories. Perhaps they were under orders not to disclose the truth of those devastating defeats. Or perhaps their commanding officers convinced them they had won. Certainly, the soldiers did not wish to worry their family and friends by revealing the horrors they witnessed. And so, while the *Wizard* succeeded in providing their readers with the best information available to them, at times it was a double edged victory.

Despite the soldiers' efforts to protect loved ones by editing their letters, what they couldn't hide were their own prejudices regarding race. South Danvers might have been a firm advocate for Abolition, but the beliefs of the men who volunteered were not as straightforward. And in *The South Danvers Wizard* can be found a window into the minds and hearts of a typical Massachusetts town regarding the subject of race and equal rights during one of the most turbulent times in our history.

This exhibit explores those beliefs.

The exhibit is located in three sections of the library:

- ◆ In the exhibit case located in front foyer
- ◆ On the display panels located near the first floor elevator
- ◆ And in the exhibit case located below the portrait of George Peabody, also near the first floor elevator.

### *Exhibit Case, Front Foyer*

The exhibit case in the front foyer contains:

- ◆ Civil War Union hat, featuring a red felt diamond on side and gold festoon on front. (Courtesy of Peabody Historical Society)
- ◆ Wooden spools used at the Oxford Woolen Mill in Oxford, Maine. These spools were used for weaving the woolen fabric used for Union uniforms during the War. (Courtesy of the Peabody Historical Society, 2002.10)

The case also holds images of local soldiers:

- ◆ Charles E. Bradford (1831-1879). He was a South Danvers teacher, who resigned his post to volunteer for the 30th Massachusetts Infantry.
- ◆ Asa Bushby (1834-1897) He worked as an artist and photographer during his years in South Danvers. During the war, he served in the 1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery as a Hospital Steward
- ◆ Lieutenant Winsor Ward (1833- 1908) He served in the 2nd Company of Massachusetts Sharpshooters. After fighting in nearly 30 battles, he was severely wounded at Gettysburg. After many surgeries, he recovered and returned to South Danvers. In 1866, he was elected Postmaster for the town, a post he held for 20 years. He also served on the town's water board. After his death in 1908, he was buried at Cedar Grove Cemetery.
- ◆ Eugene Putnam Townsend, born Aug. 29, 1846, enlisted September 6, 1861 at the age of 18 according to record but was really 15. After fighting in several battles, he was wounded in the shoulders at the Battle of Gaines' Mills and was discharged on Nov. 2, 1862 for disability, On May 10, 1864, he volunteered for Veteran's Reserve Corp until Sept. 20, 1866. While serving in the Veteran's Reserve Corp, he was part of honor guard for President Lincoln's funeral. After his return, he worked as a laborer in town for a few years before moving to Gloucester. Because of the ongoing trouble he had with his arm, he filed for a pension in 1883. He was granted one for \$15 a month. He died sometime between then and 1890.

### *Exhibit Panels by First Floor Elevator*

These reproductions of the original letters were printed in the *Wizard* during the Civil War.

They are presented in three sections:

- ◆ Views on Race and Emancipation
- ◆ Views on the Battles
- ◆ Views on Life in the Union Army

### *Biographies of South Danvers Correspondents*

During the Civil War, the men from South Danvers served in almost sixty regiments. Their service took them into every state where the war was fought.

**John Hodgeman Ayer.** He was born in South Danvers in 1829 and enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Company Massachusetts Sharpshooters. During his service, he fought at the Battle of Ball's Bluff. He deserted on August 29, 1862. While there is no record of where he went, he may have traveled to relatives in New Hampshire. Such desertions were quite common during the Civil War. It is estimated that anywhere from 8% to 15% of Union troops deserted.

**George F. Barnes (1835-1894)** He was born in Deering, New Hampshire and came to South Danvers in 1858 to teach, quickly rising to become the principal of the Bowditch School in 1859. He enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry as a Lieutenant in September 1862, serving first for nine months and then again for one hundred days in 1864. After the war, he returned to South Danvers to work as an agent and married Carrie Spencer. They had three children, Herman Gibson, Edith Cook and Clarence Wheeler Barnes. He owned a furniture store on Foster Street, but sometime before his death in 1894, he returned to teaching.

**Charles A. Brown (1843-1916)** He was born in Salem and came with his family to South Danvers sometime before 1860. He enlisted in the 19<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry in 1861, almost the moment he turned 18. Brown fought at the Battles of Ball's Bluff and the Seven Days Battle in which he was injured. Instead of resigning because of disability, he transferred to the Veteran's Reserve Corp, which was established to allow disabled soldiers to perform physically easier tasks, freeing other soldiers for the front lines. After the war ended, he married Mary Ellen Shaw in 1866. They had three children, Frank Adelbert, Lottie Alice and Jonathan Shaw.

**Asa Bushby (1834-1897)** He was born in South Danvers and began drawing as a child. Not long after the war began, he enlisted on July 5, 1861 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, Massachusetts Heavy Artillery as a Hospital Steward. After he mustered out on July 8, 1864, he opened a photographic studio in South Danvers. In 1888, he moved out to Tacoma, Washington where he continued to paint and work as a photographer until his death in 1897.

**William Blany Hammond (1834-1895).** Hammond was born in Salisbury and by 1840, his parents had settled in Danvers. His first job was in the office of the *Salem Gazette*. After a disagreement with one his co-workers, he went to work for the *South Danvers Wizard*. Just after he began to work for the paper, he married Georgiana Staples and they had their first child, Susie. Perhaps because of her birth, he delayed enlisting until October 9, 1861, when he joined the 24<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry. He served with the regiment for three years, fighting in the Battles of Roanoke Island, Secessionsville, Fort Wagner and the Siege of Petersburg. He was the *Wizard's* most regular contributor during the War. After the war, he returned to South Danvers to continue his work as a printer. But after his wife's death, he moved to Georgetown, where he married for a second time, Mary L. DeWolfe. They had a daughter, Bessie. Not long after, he founded the *Georgetown Advocate*, which he published until his death in 1895.

**Charles W. Hanson** Hanson was born in 1836 in Salem and married Maria H. Whitney of South Danvers in 1860. He moved here soon after the war had begun to work for the *South Danvers Wizard*. Not long after his daughter Alice's birth in 1862, he enlisted in the 39<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry as a sergeant. By the time he mustered out in 1864, he had risen to captain in the regiment. He fought in many battles including Rappahannock Station, Cold Harbor and Petersburg. After his return to South Danvers, he worked as a bookkeeper and later moved to Lowell, Massachusetts with his wife Maria and children Alice and John.

**Dennison P. Moore** He was born in 1840 in Beverly and enlisted May 1, 1861 for three months in the 5<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment. He was wounded at the Battle of Bull Run on July 21<sup>st</sup> and, after returning home to recover, mustered out at the end of July. He worked as a night watchman in town for many years before moving to East Boston.

**Frank Plummer** was born about 1836 in Milo, Maine. Sometime before 1860, he arrived in South Danvers to work as a shoemaker. In September 1861, he enlisted in the 24<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry as a Corporal and soon rose to Sergeant. He resigned on April 22, 1864 because of disability resulting from injuries. Just before his resignation, he married Isannah Ellen Goldthwait of South Danvers. They had three daughters, Fannie, Carrie and Jennie. Isannah died of tuberculosis in 1880. After her death, Frank left South Danvers, perhaps to return to his native Maine.

Horace Poole (1836-1916) was the son of Fitch and Mary Ann (Poor) Poole. He left South Danvers in 1856 for Iowa and when the war broke out, he enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Iowa Infantry, also known as the Iowa Grays. After his three month service ended, he re-enlisted in the 21<sup>st</sup> Iowa Infantry for the remainder of the war. He served first as lieutenant and later as an Adjutant to the General. In 1864, he returned to South Danvers to marry Frances Forrest Langworthy. After the war, they lived in Dubuque, Iowa where they had two sons, Clark and Horace. Poole worked, first as a wholesale grocer, and later as a U.S. Marshall.

Noses Shackley (1843-1864) was the only remaining son of Moses and Almira (Maxwell) Shackley. He enlisted in the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment in April 1861 for three months. He then re-enlisted in the 19<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry as a wagoner. He fought in nearly thirty battles, including Gettysburg and Antietam. He rose from private to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. After three years service with the 19<sup>th</sup>, he enlisted once again in the 59<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry. Sadly, however, he was killed on May 12, 1864 at the Battle of Spotsylvania.

William F. Sumner (1821-1892) Sumner was born in Beverly and came to South Danvers to work as a leather splitter by 1840. He married Harriet Augusta Gould of Georgetown in 1840. They had four children, John Addison, Joseph Newhall, Abigail Ann and Henry A. William volunteered to serve three months in the 5<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry. He fought in the Battle of Bull Run before resigning in August 1861. He continued his work as a leather splitter for the remainder of his life.

William L. Thompson was born about 1835. He served nine months in the 5<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry as a Lieutenant first in 1862, then again for another nine months in 1864. Though the regiment fought in many skirmishes, their spent most of the war on guard duty at New Berne, North Carolina.

John Thornton was born about 1840. He volunteered for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Massachusetts Infantry in 1862 and served in that regiment until the end of the war.

Harrison Whittemore was born in Andover about 1837. He and his father arrived in South Danvers before 1860. Before volunteering for the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Infantry, Harrison worked as a Civil Engineer in town. After the war, he moved to Melrose where he and his wife Eunice had two children, Arthur and Charles.

*Exhibit Case below George Peabody Portrait*

Contained within this case are:

- ◆ Photograph of Warren Galeucia, who served for 9 months (1864 to 1865) in the 4th Massachusetts Heavy Artillery. This picture was taken in June 1865 in Arlington Heights, Virginia.
- ◆ A Cartridge bag carried by a typical Union soldier. It has a split leather shoulder strap, and a wooden insert with 22 vertical 3/4" holes for cartridges. (Courtesy of Peabody Historical Society, MA-08)
- ◆ Photograph taken about 1900 of Civil War veterans at the Memorial Day parade. (Courtesy of Peabody Historical Society, MBPPG-13)
- ◆ Framed photograph of Lieutenant Winsor M. Ward of the 2nd Massachusetts Sharpshooters, along with the bullet that wounded him in Gettysburg. Though the photograph identifies him as a Captain, he enlisted as a corporal on May 19, 1863 and after the Battle of Gettysburg was promoted to 1st Lieutenant. He resigned due to disability on September 21, 1864.  
(Courtesy of Peabody Historical Society, MBPPG-06)
- ◆ Menu for Dinner given In Honor of Officers and Returned Prisoners of the 39th Massachusetts Regiment. The 39th Regiment fought in dozens of skirmishes and battles, among them the Battles of the Wilderness, Petersburg and Appomattox. (Courtesy of Peabody Historical Society)
- ◆ Roll Call of Company C of the 5th Regiment, Massachusetts Infantry. This unit was formed on August 14, 1862. They mainly served guard duty in New Berne, North Carolina, which had been occupied by Union forces early in the war. They also fought in the Battles of Whitehall and Goldsboro. They were mustered out on July 2, 1863.

### *By the End of the War*

In all, about 877 men from South Danvers served in the Army or Navy during the Civil War. In a town of approximately 6500 people, this amounted to about 13% of the population.

Of these 877 men, 117 were discharged because of disability, which was 13% of the men who served. Only 4% of those who served from South Danvers deserted, which was a much lower average than the 8% to 15% estimates for Union desertions. And by the end of the war 71 men died, either in battle or because of disease.

The Civil War monument to honor those who died was erected in Peabody square in 1881.



Civil War veterans in the Memorial Day Parade in 1900.